(c) Major importers of steel during 1997-98 included Ispat Industries, Uttam Steels Ltd., Jindal Iron & Steel, Bajaj Auto, Maruti Ltd., STEELCO Gujarat, Mahindra & Mahindra, TELCO, Raymond Steels, Nagarjuna Steels, and others.

(d) Steel was imported mainly from the following countries in the recent past:

CIS, Germany, Japan, France; U.K.; Belgium, USA, South Africa, Iran Holland, Slovak Rep., Spain, etc.

Research and development in the Steel Sector

2146. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the amount earmarked on research and Development in the Steel sector during Ninth Plan;

(b) whether enough attention is not being paid in research and development (R&D);

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to lay proper emphasis in that area?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (d) The steel units in public sector and some units in private sector usually provide funds for their R&D programmes. However, in order to give boost to R&D efforts in the steel sector, Government have also approved an allocation of Rs. 150 crores per annum to be financed through Steel Development Fund (SDF).

Increase in prices of SAIL

2147. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Steel prices have been increased;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) its impact on production and demand?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) SAIL has increased the listed prices in certain categories of mild steel products w.e.f. 01/07/1997. While effecting the price increase, factors such as overall market scenario, competitors prices, landed cost of imports, cost of production etc. have been taken into account. Therefore, there has been no significant impact on production and demand.

Revival plan of Indian Iron and Steel Company Limited

2148. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) since when the Indian Iron and Steel Company Limited is sick;

(b) the cumulative losses suffered by it;

(c) whether there is any proposal to revive the plant; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) Indian Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. (IISCO) was declared a sick industrial company by the Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) on 17th August, 1994.

(b) The cumulative loss of IISCO as on 31/03/1997 is Rs. 1159 crore (provisional).

(c) and (d) Steel Authority of India Limited have submitted a proposal to revive IISCO in a joint venture partnership with M/s Tvazhpromexport (TPE) of Russia. This proposal is dependent on the use of Rupee

Debt funds for which an inter-Governmental agreement between Government of India and the Russian Government is required.

Modernisation of Rourkela and Durgapur Steel Plants

2149. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the investment made by SAIL to modernise Rourkela and Durgapur Plants;

(b) whether the performance of the Companies were not upto the expectation; and

(c) the steps proposed to ensure that full benefits from the investments made should start by major training programmes for the employees to acquaint with the modern technology introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) SAIL has invested an amount of Rs. 4472.85 crores on modernisation of Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP) and Rs. 3453.84 crores on modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) till 1996-97.

The modernisation programmes are in advance stages of completion in these steel plants and their envisaged performance will be known on completion of the various units and their stabilisation.

(c) In order to ensure full benefits from the investments made in the modernisation projects, SAIL proposes to depute 535 employees of DSP and 445 employees of RSP on training during the year 1997-98. Further, under equipment supply contracts, employees earmarked for manning new equipments are deputed for training abroad at suppliers work sites to acquaint them with the operational procedures and techniques.

भारतीय इस्पात प्राधिकरण लिमिटेड में नये पदों के सृजन पर प्रतिबंध

2150. **श्री अजीत जोगी :** क्या इस्पात मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार ने भारतीय इस्पात प्राधिकरण लिमिटेड में नये पदों के सृजन पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं;

(ग) क्या भारतीय इस्पात प्राधिकरण लिमिटेड में कर्मचारियों की संख्या अपेक्षित संख्या से अधिक है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो अधिशेष कर्मचारियों की संख्या कितनी है और इसके परिणामस्वरूप किए जा रहे अतिरिक्त व्यय का ब्यौरा क्या है ?

इस्पात मंत्री तथा खान मंत्री (श्री बीरेन्द्र प्रसाद वैश्य) : (क) और (ख) सरकार ने स्टील अथॉरिटी आफ इंडिया लि० में नए पदों के सृजन पर प्रतिबंध नहीं लगाया है ।

(ग) और (घ) 'सेल' में श्रमशक्ति की तैनाती को युक्तिसंगत बनाना एक संबद्ध प्रक्रिया है जहां कहीं सावधानीपूर्वक विनियमन से स्वभाविक पृथकीकरण के स्थान पर भर्ती की जाती है वहां वार्षिक मानव संसाधन बजट के माध्यम से जनशक्ति का इष्टतम उपयोग करने के लिए सेल द्वारा अभिज्ञात प्रयास किए जाते हैं ।

Exploration of minerals by NMDC

2151. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:
SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether NMDC have prepared any plan to survey and to explore